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TAGS: PREL SOCI VT

SUBJECT: HOLY SEE REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT THE MAPUTO PLAN

REF: (A) STATE 39149, (B) 06 VATICAN 251, (C) VATICAN 011

CLASSIFIED BY: Christopher Sandrolini, Deputy Chief of Mission,
EXEC, State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Ambassador and DCM called on Monsignor Pietro Parolin, the Holy See's Undersecretary for Relations with States (i.e. deputy foreign minister) April 3 and raised ref a points, asking for Vatican help in resisting the Plan's language on diverting HIV/AIDS funding and on abortion. Parolin recalled that following discussions with post (ref b), the Holy See had tasked all its nuncios last fall to lobby their host governments for changes in the Maputo Plan. Observing that the abortion issue is one of utmost importance to the Holy See, Parolin noted that Pope Benedict XVI had directly criticized the Maputo Plan (as an "attempt to trivialize abortion surreptitiously") during his annual address to the diplomatic corps in January of this year (ref c). Parolin said the Holy See would continue to take action to press African governments on the issue; he hoped that they would at least go on record with their reservations on the abortion issue.

¶2. (C) Comment: Post has been engaged with the Holy See on this issue for some time. A Vatican foreign ministry official told us this week that he didn't see how the Maputo Plan could be derailed now, and that the "reservation option" mentioned by Parolin would be the best chance at this point to influence events. End comment.

¶3. (C) Action request: Parolin asked which governments were most responsible for shaping the current document. Post would appreciate guidance from Department on this point.

ROONEY